

Guiding Language Learning with Formative Assessment



Your Workshop can do

I can . . .

- say what motivated/empowered learners need in order to stay motivated/empowered
- explain why tests are bad for so many students
- explain why formative checks for learning are so important
- tell someone how to give effective feedback
- use research to more effectively assign grades

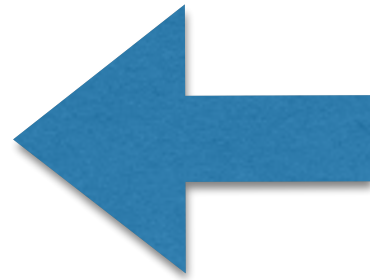
Our Most Important Goal as Teachers?

create the confident,
self-efficacious
learner . . .

*someone who
believes in their ability
to complete tasks and
reach goals*



How do we go about doing that?



confident

self-efficacious

It's all about motivation!

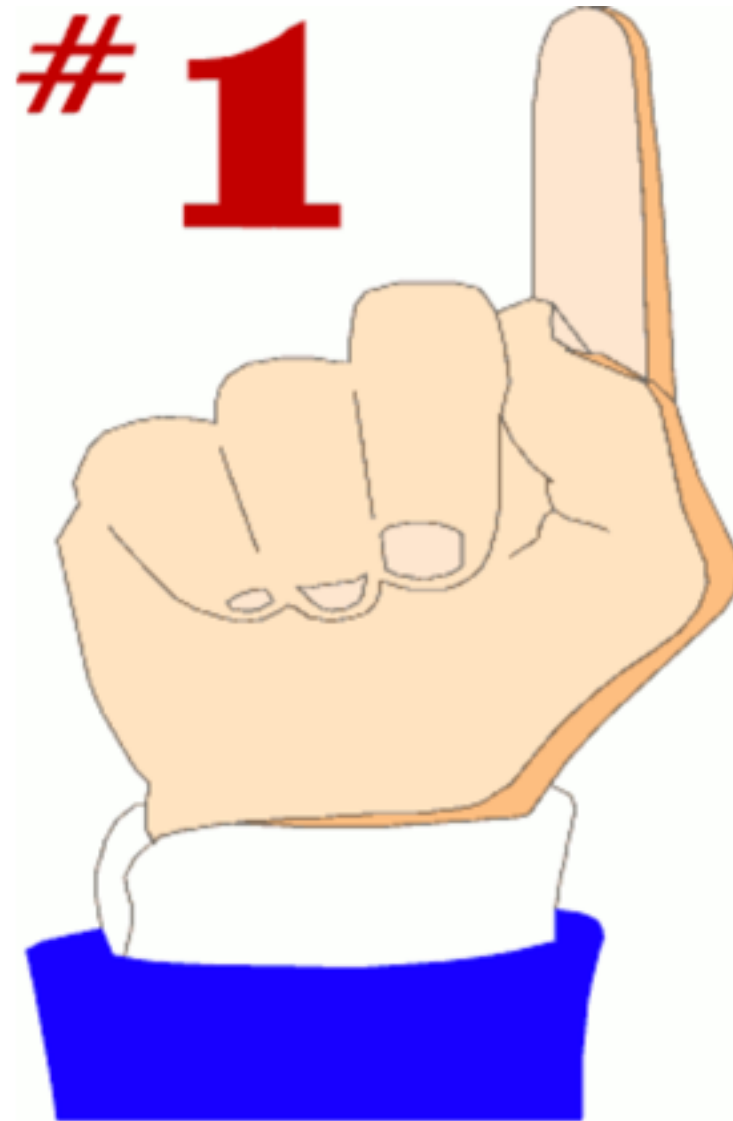


Motivated learners are **BETTER** learners.

Motivated learners learn **MORE**.

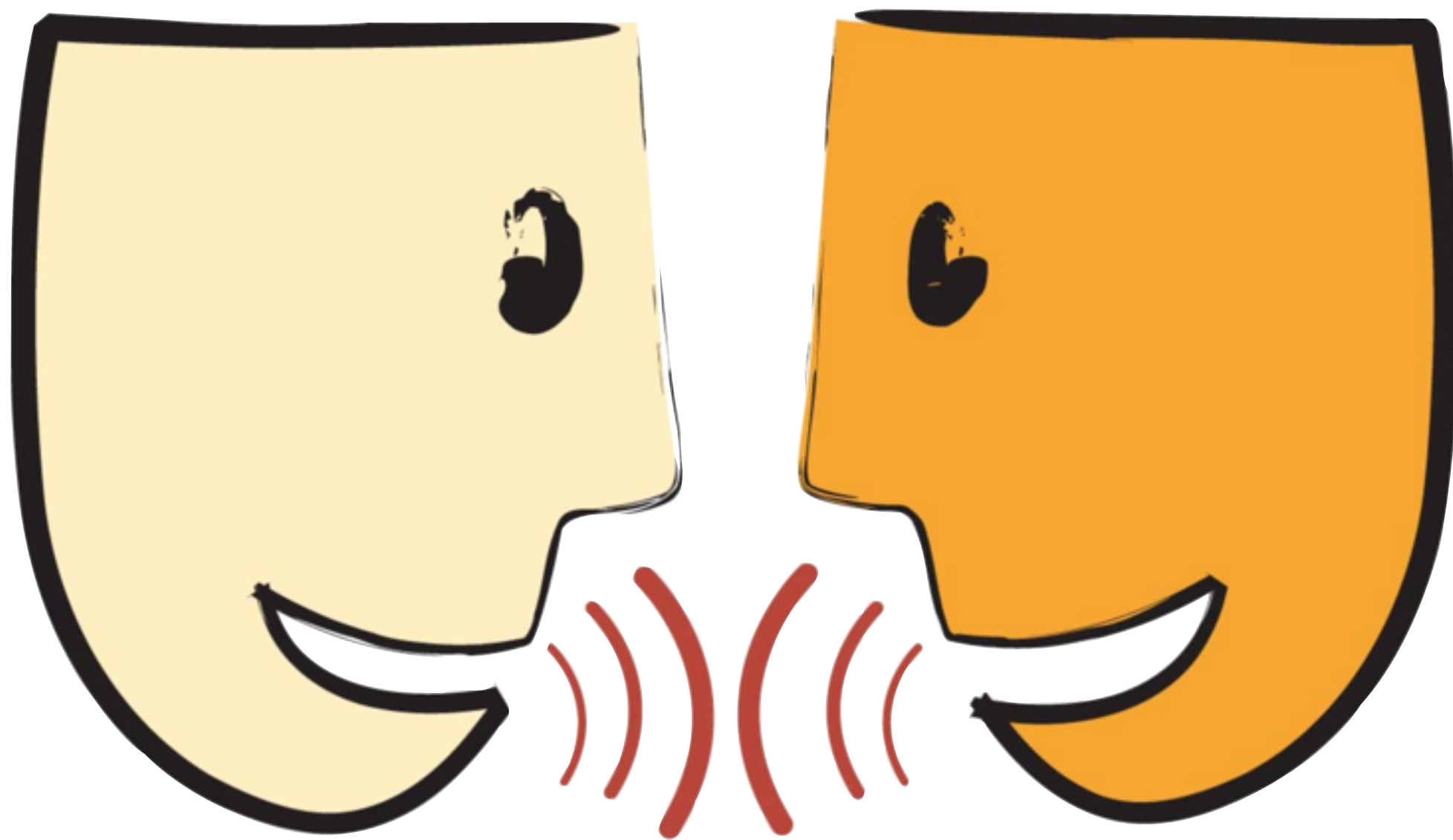
Motivated learners have
STAYING POWER!

Nuzzo asked . . .



what do you want more than anything else
out of your foreign language experience?

Their answer?



SPEAK the language!!

When students get what
they want or need . . .



their motivation GROWS.

When students do NOT get
what they want or need . . .



their motivation DIES.

Understanding the motivated learner

- interest
- relevance
- expectancy
- outcomes



The motivated learner is
an empowered learner.





Empowered Learners have requirements

- interest
- relevance
- expectancy
- outcomes



*how well they
are doing*

Reality



Check

ask a student . . .

**in school, how do you usually find out
how well you're doing?**

**how do your teachers find out what
you know and can do?**

The answer?

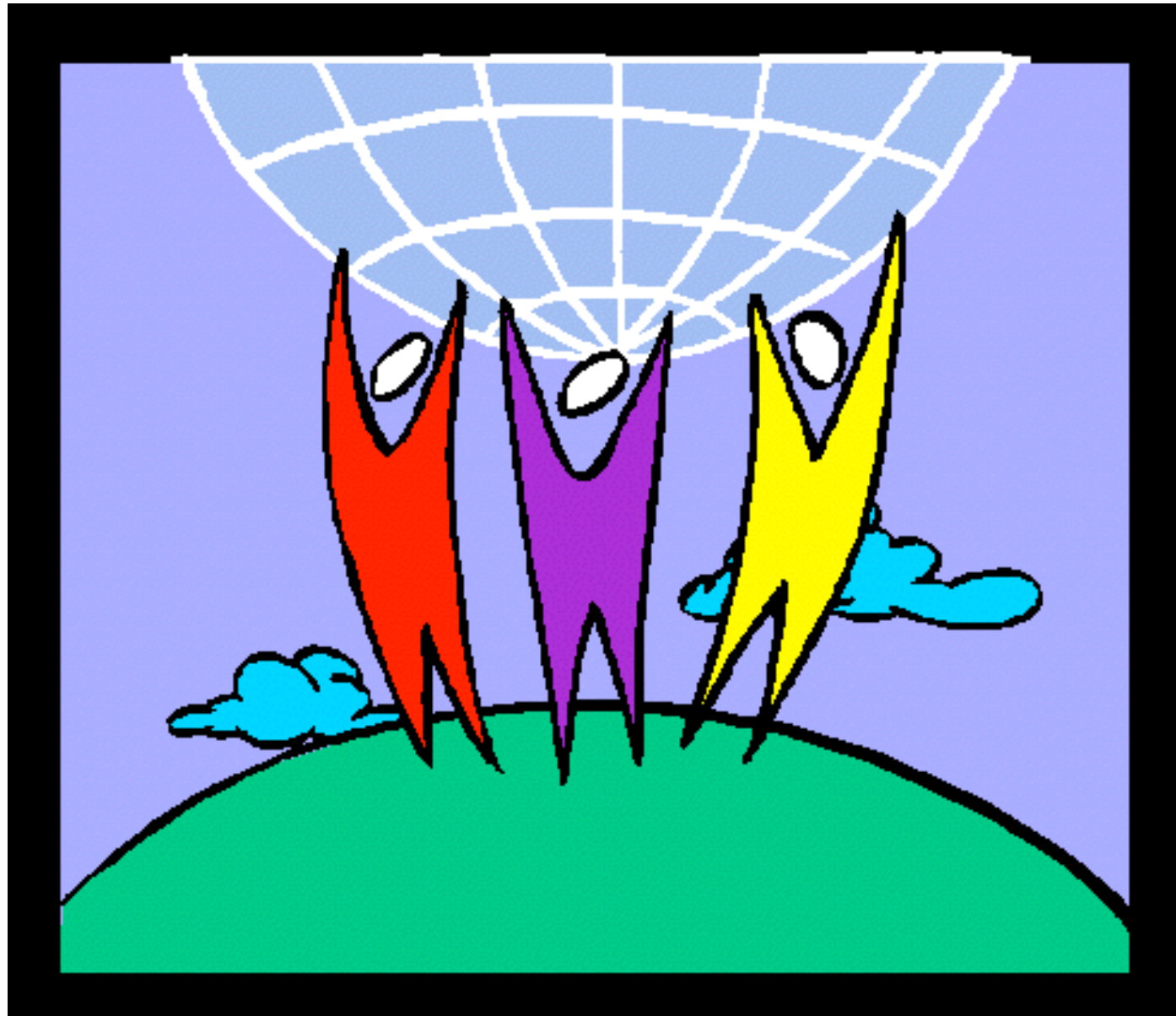
TESTS

At your table, come up with a list of words that students would associate with the word "tests."



So, "testing" is really only ONE way to assess and . . .

- it is sometimes the least effective way to find out what our students can DO with the language
- it "demotivates" the vast majority of our students



Motivation is
the most
influential
factor in
learning a
new
language.

R. C. Gardner in Shrum and
Glisan

Teacher's Handbook
2000

"Testing" is really only ONE way to assess and . . .

- it is sometimes the least effective way to find out what our students can DO with the language
- it “demotivates” the vast majority of our students
- it generates tons of student anxiety





... acquisition
can only occur in
the presence of
certain affective
conditions: i.e.,
the learner is
motivated, self-
confident, and
has a low level
of anxiety.

Stephen Krashen in Shrum and Glisan

Teacher's Handbook
2000

Ironie, isn't it?

. . . that one of the least effective ways to assess foreign language learning is the assessment option that is used the most.



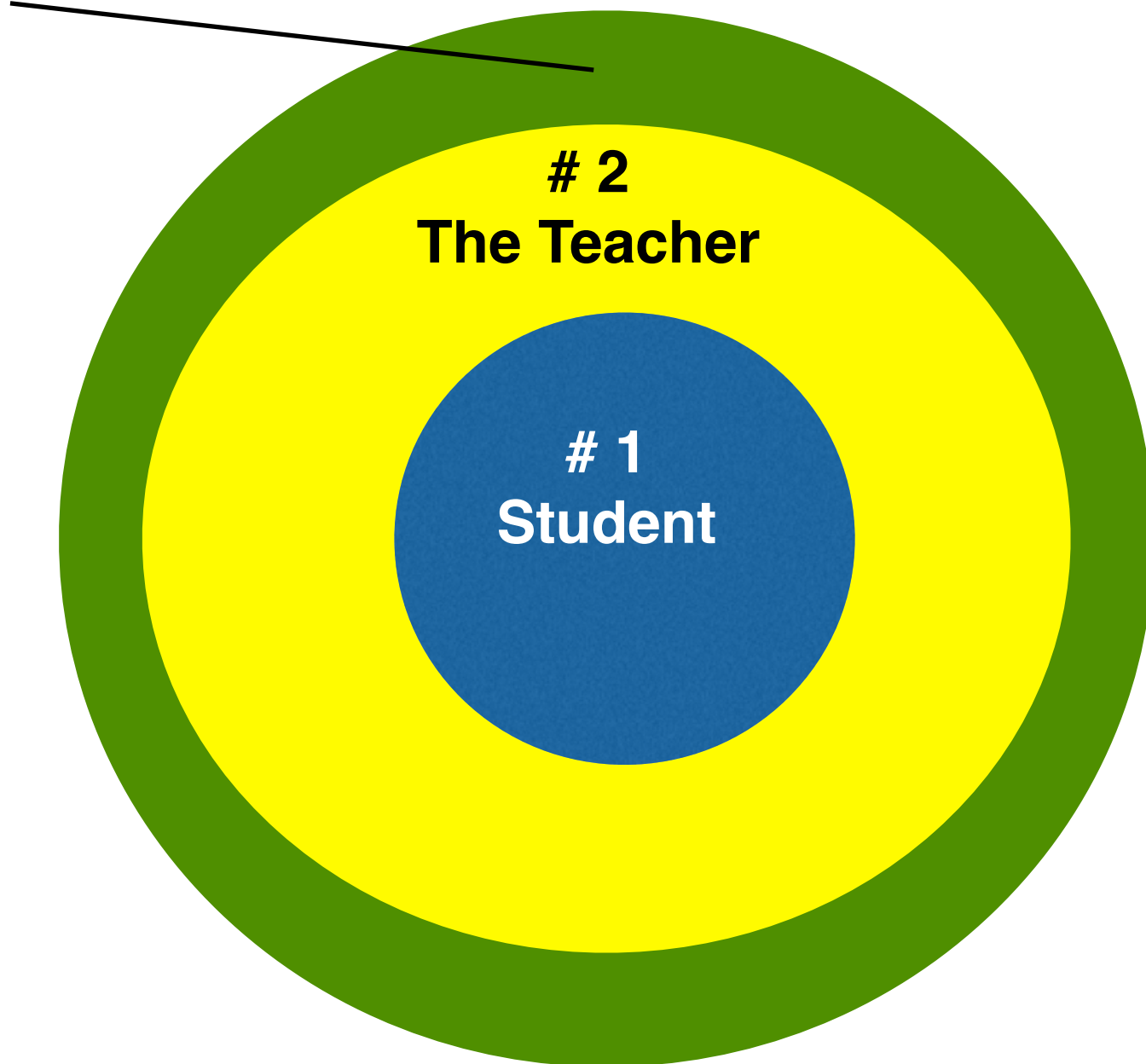


1. Who are the people who need to know about how much learning is happening?

2. In what order would you place them?

Checking for Learning

#3
Everybody else

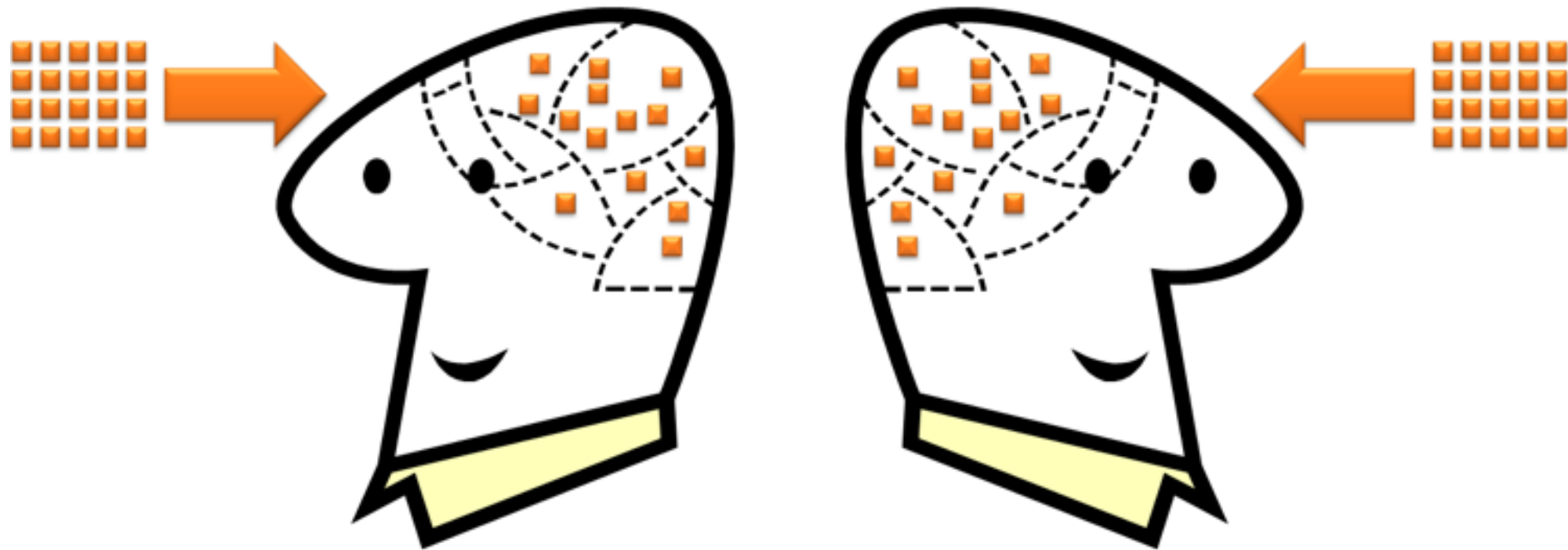


two

basic ways to
check for learning

- formatively
- summatively

Formative checks for Learning



are teacher created opportunities that are embedded into each and every lesson. They provide both teacher and student the opportunity to ensure that the lesson's performance objectives are being achieved.

Summative checks for Learning

- intended as opportunities to show off what a learner can do. They are more cumulative in nature
 - * end of unit checks

Integrated Performance Assessment

INTERPRETIVE TASK

Learners understand, interpret, and analyze what is heard, read, or viewed on a variety of topics.

You have the opportunity to attend a summer camp abroad. Read and/or watch videos about different camps. Complete a graphic organizer about the camps. Answer a few questions about your interests, select a camp, and explain about why it is the best camp for you.

INTERACTIVE TASK

Learners interact and negotiate meaning in written conversations or face-to-face discussions.

You want your best friend to attend the same camp that you have chosen. Talk about the advantages and disadvantages of each. Compromise on a final decision.

PRESENTATIONAL TASK

Learners present information, concepts, and ideas to inform, explain, persuade, and narrate on a variety of topics using appropriate media and adapting to various audiences of listeners, readers, or viewers.

Design the ideal camp for speakers of the target language who might want to study abroad in your community. Determine the location, daily schedule, and the types of activities. Create a marketing campaign for your camp.

Summative checks for Learning

- intended as opportunities to show off what a learner can do. They are more cumulative in nature
 - * end of unit checks
 - * projects
 - * presentations

Summative checks for
Learning

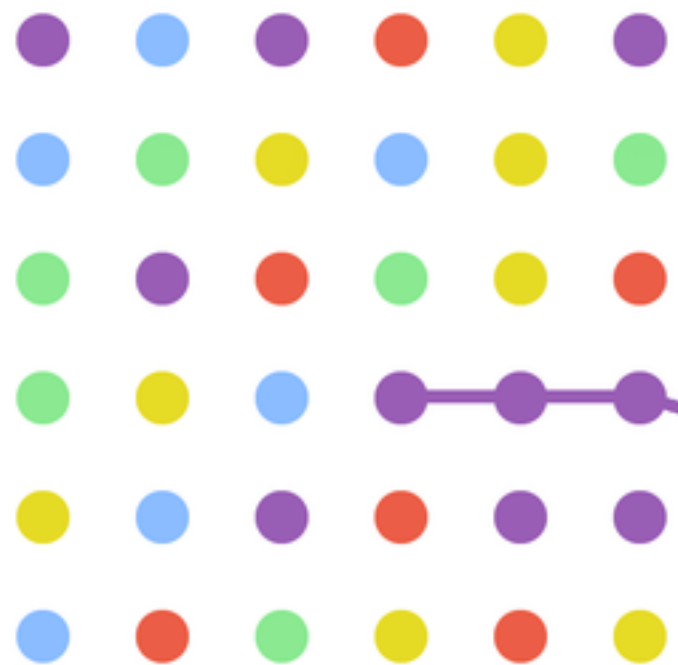
Formative checks for
Learning

one more helpful than the other?

Formative checks for learning

- research suggests it is THE most effective way to improve learning
- enormous potential to provide timely, meaningful feedback about learning *while it is happening*

Connecting



dots . . .

Motivated/empowered
Learners **MUST** know how
well they are doing.

For Learners . . .

- feedback on learning EVERY day
- frequency and improvement
- struggling learners big winners



For Teachers . . .



- student = agent
- feedback for teachers
- adaptations in the moment and for tomorrow

Formative checks for learning ... in a nutshell



Students and teachers

Using evidence

To adapt teaching and learning

To meet individual needs

Minute-to-minute and day-by-day

Thompson and Wiliam, 2007

What formative check for Learning?

- ANY instructional activity can serve as a formative check for learning
- an opportunity for the student and teacher to find out if the student “gets it” and helps determine what might still need to be done
- NO MYSTERY!

Using formative checks for learning tell us . . .

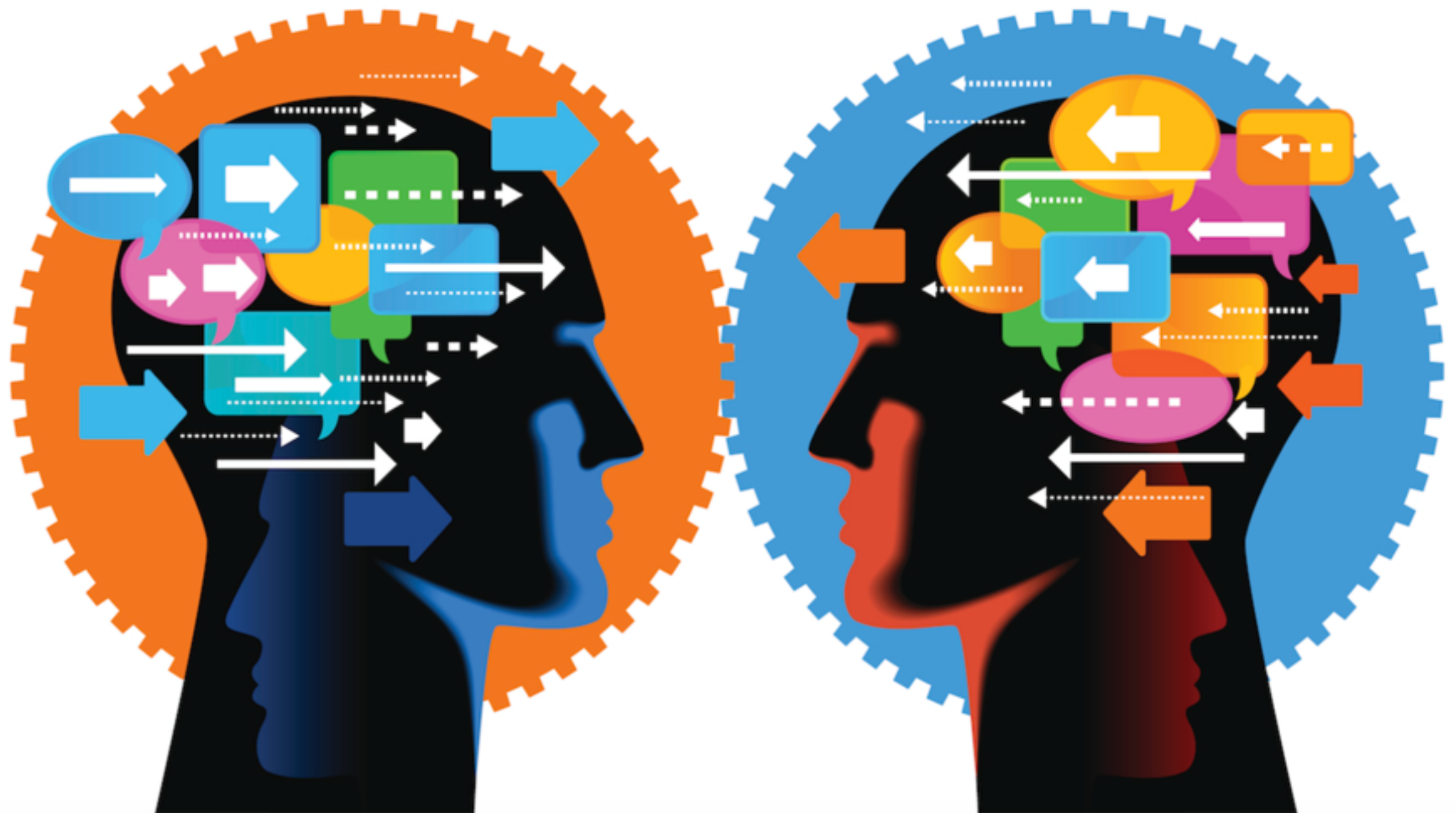
- Who is and who is not understanding the lesson?
- What are the students' strengths and needs?
- What misconceptions do I need to address?
- What feedback should I give students?
- What adjustments should I make to instruction?
- How should I group students?
- What differentiation do I need to prepare?

Some formative strategies

- Break into language groups of 4-5 people per group.
- Take time to scan through the activities.
- Which ones do you favor and why?
- Which ones might work better for beginners and which ones for more advanced students?



Feedback and the Learner



Research . . .



IMPROVED
STUDENT
ACHIEVEMENT

- The most critical factor in improving student achievement is the *teacher*.
- Not what the teacher knows but *what the teacher does*.

As a result of reviewing almost 8,000 studies, researcher John Hattie (1992) made this observation:

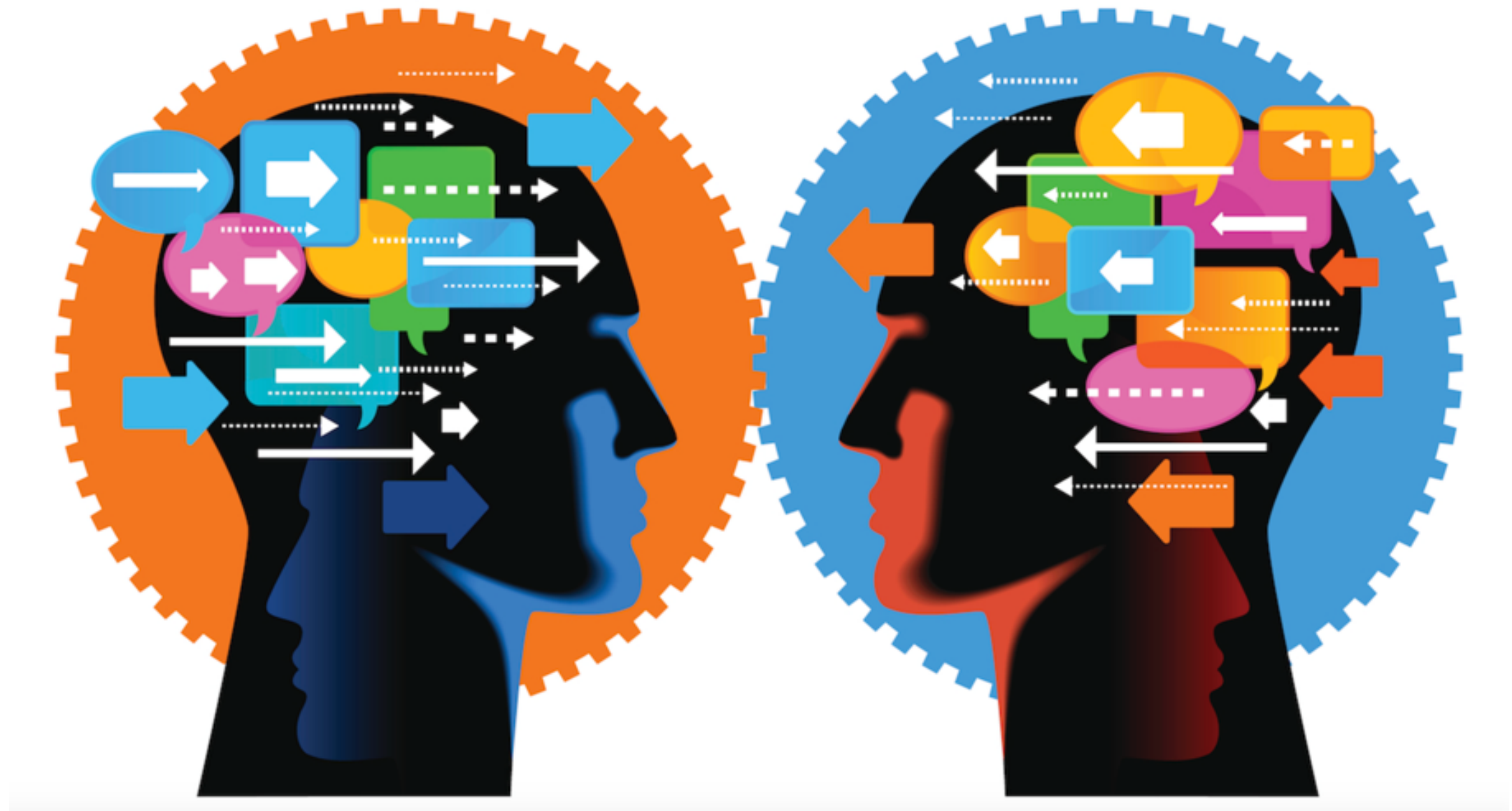
“The most powerful single modification that enhances achievement is feedback. The simplest prescription for improving education must be ‘dollops of feedback.’”

Marzano, *Classroom Assessment & Grading That Work*, ASCD: 2006

Why is feedback so important?



- it is critical for improvement;
- motivated learners must have it;
- it provides non-judgmental information;
- it opens up a dialog between teacher and student;
- it empowers learners.



What is feedback?



Where am I going?

How will I get there?

Why am I learning this?

Where do I need to go next?



FEEDBACK is . . .
just-in-time,
just-for-me information
delivered
when and where
it can do the most good.

Feedback . . .

What was or was not accomplished given a
specific goal

Grant Wiggins, "Assessment as Feedback." New Horizons for Learning, 2004

The power of feedback lies in its *two-pronged* approach, addressing both **cognitive** and **motivational** factors at the same time.



Good feedback provides students information that tells them where they are at the moment and helps them figure out what to do next--the **cognitive** factor.

When students understand what to do and why, they realize that they have control over their own learning--the **motivational** factor.



feedback

up close and personal

Giving Effective Feedback to Your Students

Play All

Introduction

Differentiating Feedback

Effective Oral Feedback

Individual Oral Feedback

“Quick-Quiet” Feedback

In-Class Conferencing

Group Oral Feedback

Effective Written Feedback

Notes on Student Work/
Annotations on Rubrics

Tailoring Feedback to Meet
Content and Student Needs

3

Effective Visual/Demonstration
Feedback

Modeling Openness to
Criticism

Benefit to Self-Assessment/
Self-Monitoring

Peer Editing

Adjusting for Different Types
of Learners

Successful Students

Struggling Students

English Language
Learners

Accessing the Professional
Development Tools



Turn to your partner !



So what did you observe in those
3 feedback sessions?

2 Types of Feedback



- Evaluative
- Descriptive



Evaluative feedback . . .

sums up achievement and assigns a label. It expresses judgment.

- Grades--A, B, C, D, F
- Letters--P for Proficient, D for Developing, B for Beginning
- Numbers--4 for Exceeds Standard, 3 for Meets Standard, etc.
- Words--Excellent, Good, Fair, Poor
- Other symbols--smiley faces, stars, plusses, checks, minuses, etc.
- Written comments--Good work; Needs work
- Stickers--Great Job! Awesome! Super!

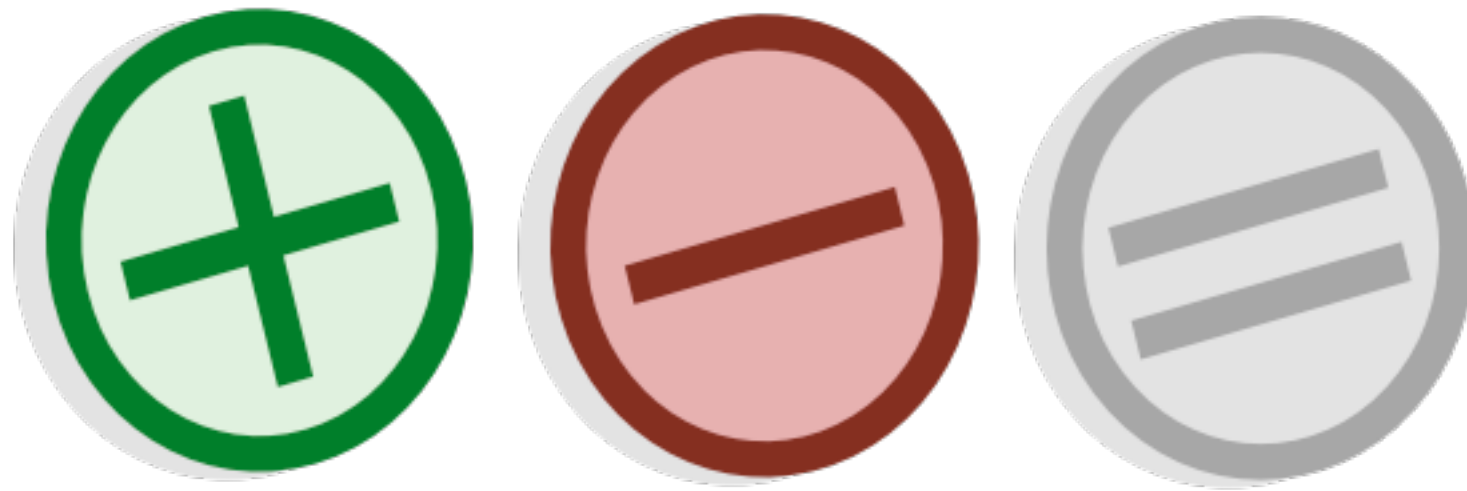


Descriptive feedback . .

offers information about the work, product or performance relative to the intended learning.

- Is value neutral--avoids praise or blame
- Focuses on the intended learning
- Shows where the work is right or wrong and why
- Pinpoints strengths and identifies areas of improvement in terms of intended learning
- Takes into account the amount of corrective information the learner can act on at one time
- Models the kind of thinking students will engage in when they self-assess
- Can be used by students to take action or improve
- Does not cause the learner to shut down





When evaluative feedback is *decreased*
and specific, descriptive feedback is
increased, students learn more.

*Anne Davies, "Involving Students in the Classroom Assessment Process,"
Ahead of the Curve, 2007*

Descriptive vs. Evaluative

Can we spot the
difference?

Descriptive? Evaluative?

1. You solved the equation; however, you need to include a written or visual explanation.
2. I liked your behavior during the task.
3. Your model of the solar system does not show the data as provided in the data.
4. Your axis is not properly labeled.
5. Your performance task needs proper measurements and a method to report the data.

Descriptive? Evaluative?

6. Good job of getting ready for lunch.

7. 70

8. B+. Good work! I am proud of you! You should be thrilled with your progress.

Tips on Giving Feedback

- Choose words and a tone that respect the learner and that empower him to be in charge of his own learning.
- Make sure to use language that is easily understandable to the learner.
- Make certain that the learner knows how his work compares to the desired product.
- Help the learner determine the steps that he can follow to improve his work.
- Don't overpower the learner with too much feedback on too many different things.

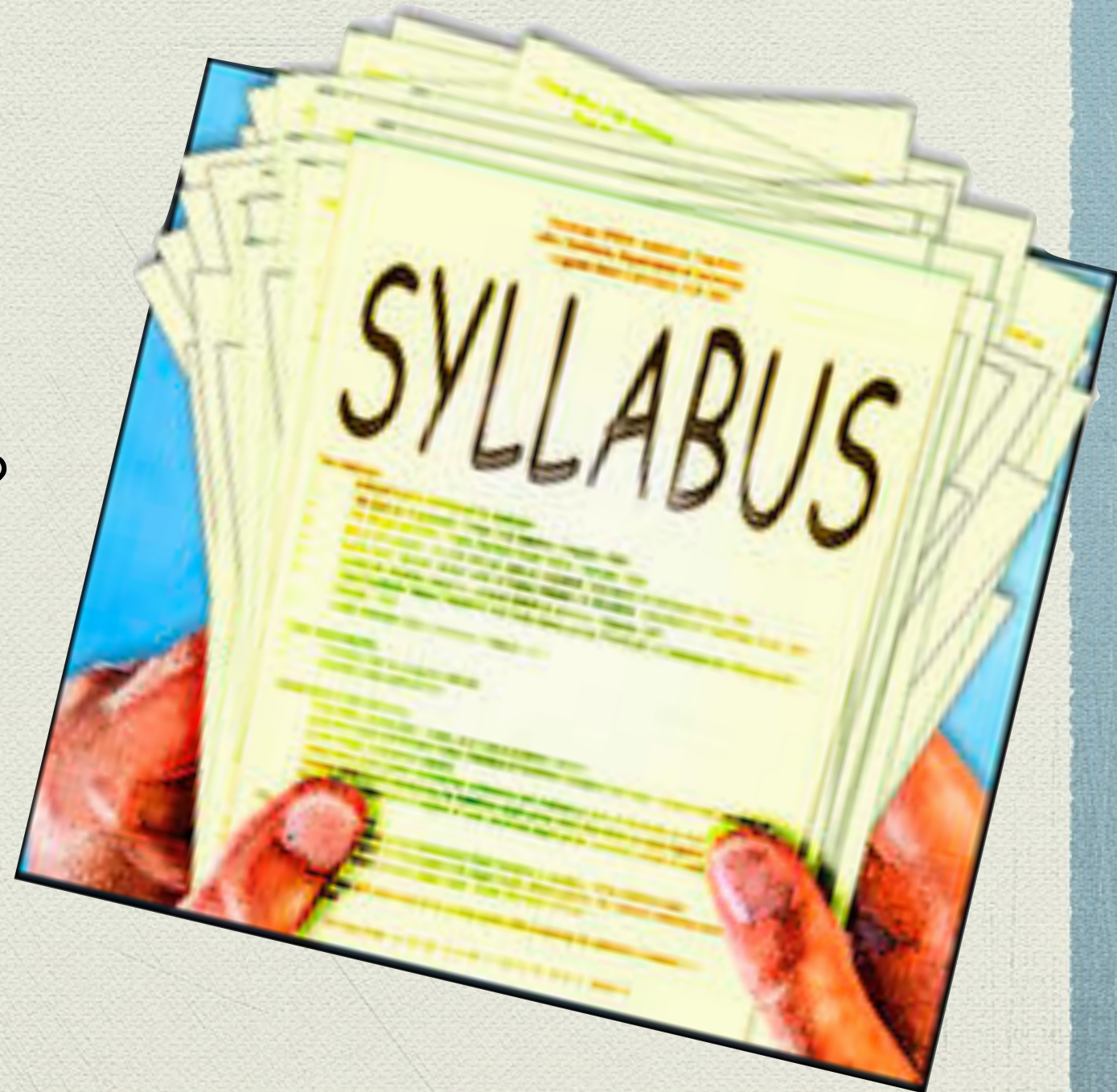


WHAT MATTERS MOST

What we assess, how we assess it, and how we “count it” tell our students what matters.

how do students find out . . .

- ◆ what will be taught?
- ◆ how will it be assessed?
- ◆ how will it “count?”



whatever *counts* the most . . .

matters the most . . .

regardless of what we SAY!



Blah
Blah
Blah

some examples . . .

What messages are students getting about what MATTERS the most in these excerpts from actual syllabi?

▪ **Units and grading**

- **Unit 1: Healthy Living.....10%**
 - review saber vs. conocer
 - review ser vs. estar
 - indirect and direct object pronouns
 - formal and informal commands
- **Unit 2: Leisure and Lifestyles.....15%**
 - subjunctive conjugations
 - subjunctive with expressions of non-existence
 - subjunctive with disagreement and denial
- **Unit 3: Communications.....15%**
 - subjunctive with influence
 - subjunctive with emotion
 - subjunctive with ESCAPA
 - subjunctive with CHAD ATE
- **Midterm Exam: comprehensive.....5%**
- **Unit 4: Future Plans.....10%**
 - future tense
 - por vs. para
- **Unit 5: The Arts.....15%**
 - preterite vs. imperfect
 - pluperfect
 - imperfect subjunctive
- **Unit 6: Global Issues.....15%**
 - conditional
 - more imperfect subjunctive
 - conditional perfect
 - pluperfect subjunctive
 - if clauses
- **Final Exam: comprehensive.....15%**

IV Grading Procedures:

- | | |
|--|-----|
| • Performance tasks (some class work and homework) | 15% |
| • Minor summative grades (grammar and vocabulary quizzes and small projects) | 30% |
| • Major summative grades (unit tests and large projects) | 45% |
| • Cumulative final exam | 10% |

Grading Computation:

Participation	15%
Class work	20%
Quizzes	15%
Tests	20%
OPI	15%
Final	15%

A	90-100
B	80-89
C	74-79
D	70-73
F	69-0

Grading Policies:

Listening (dialogues and narratives) 20%

Reading Comprehension (novel studies, articles, etc.) 20%

Interpersonal Writing (Blackboard posts, letters, etc.) 10%

Presentational Writing (picture story writing, narratives) 10%

Interpersonal Speaking (conversations, describing yourself – any thing 2+ people) 15%

Presentational Speaking (re-telling stories – anything just you talking) 15%

Midterm/Final Exam 10% (comprehensive – covering the entire year)

FINAL GRADE will be determined according to the following:

Daily Grade	20%	[10% Homework; 10% Quizzes]
Weekly Conversation	5%	[Spanish Tutor/Student Success Center]
Writing Assignments	10%	
Oral Evaluations	40%	
[Telling stories, giving explanations, explaining policies, supporting opinions, debating, etc.]		
Written Test(s)	10%	
Project/Oral Presentation	15%	

Speaking and listening progress (assessed during A.I. sessions)	40%
Tests and quizzes	25%
Workbook and other assignments (written material, homework, practice tests)	15%
Participation	10%
Final Exam	10%

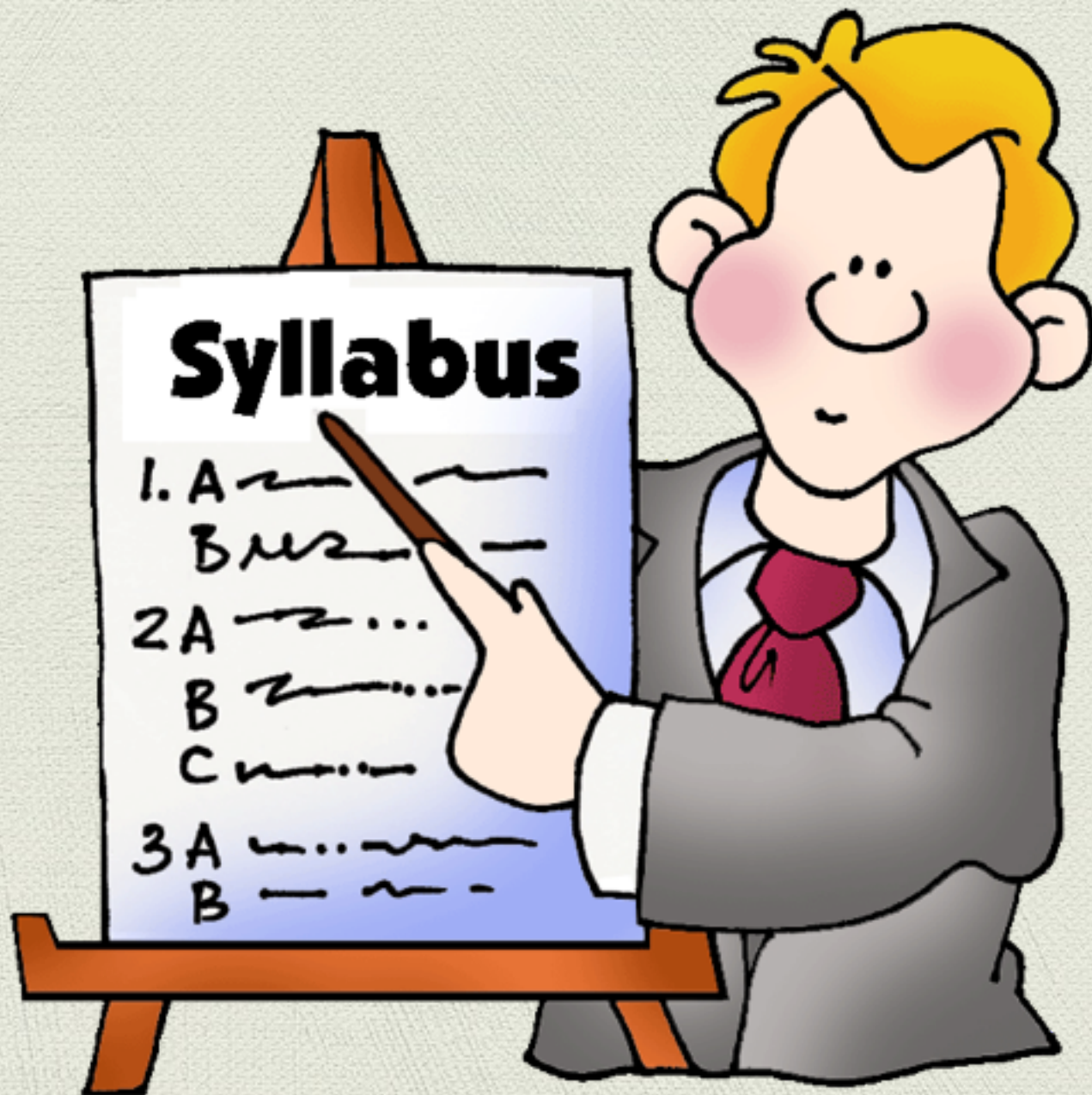
District leaders, as well as teachers, recognize that grading is THE one element in their improvement efforts that remains dreadfully *misaligned*.

Those practices have remained in place because they are *familiar*, even though they may not accurately reflect what students are learning.

Grading is bound by *tradition*.

Thomas Guskey in "Bound by Tradition--Today's Grading Practices Reflect the Past,"
Education Update, ASCD, June 2012

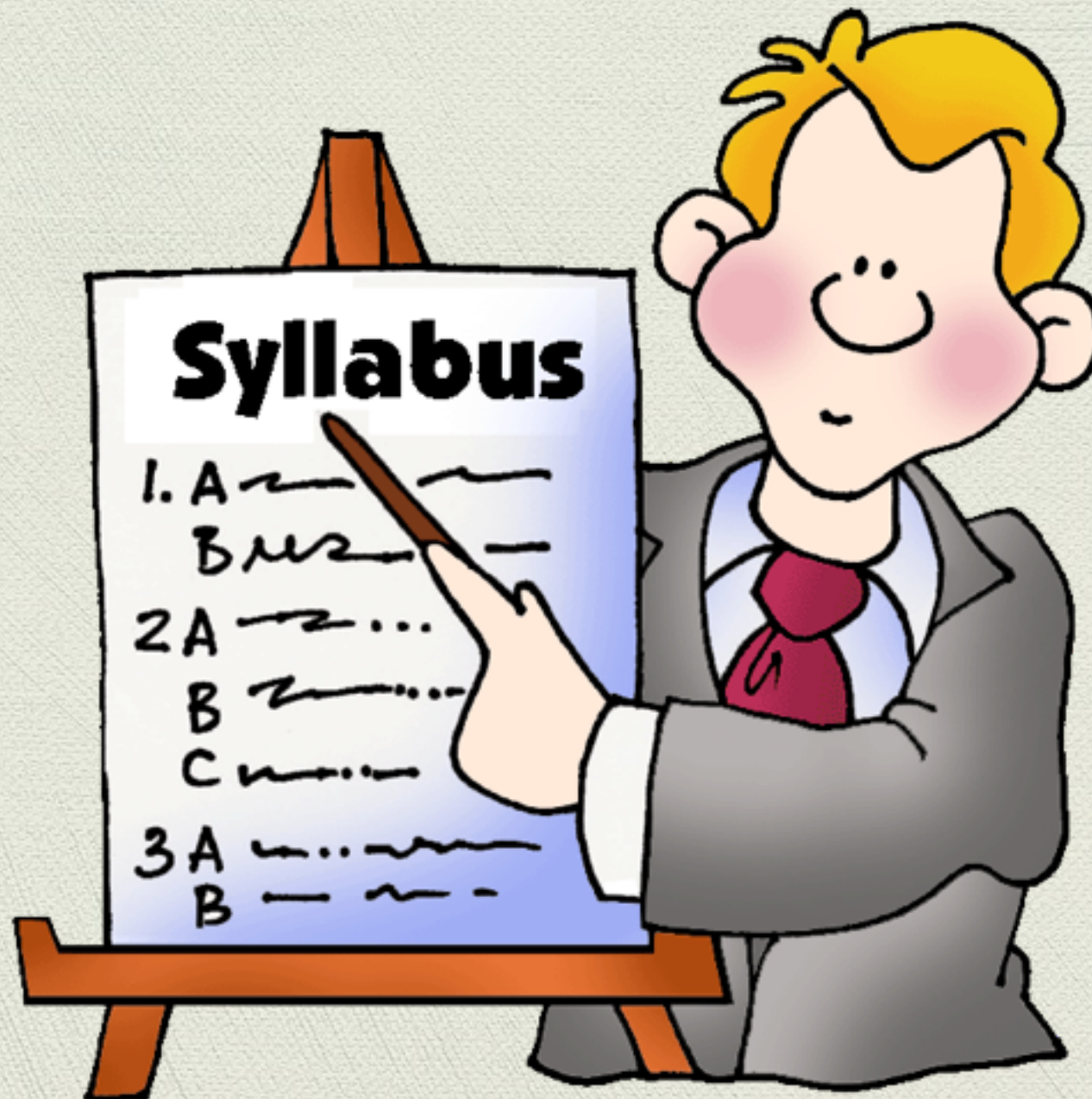
take a few minutes . . .

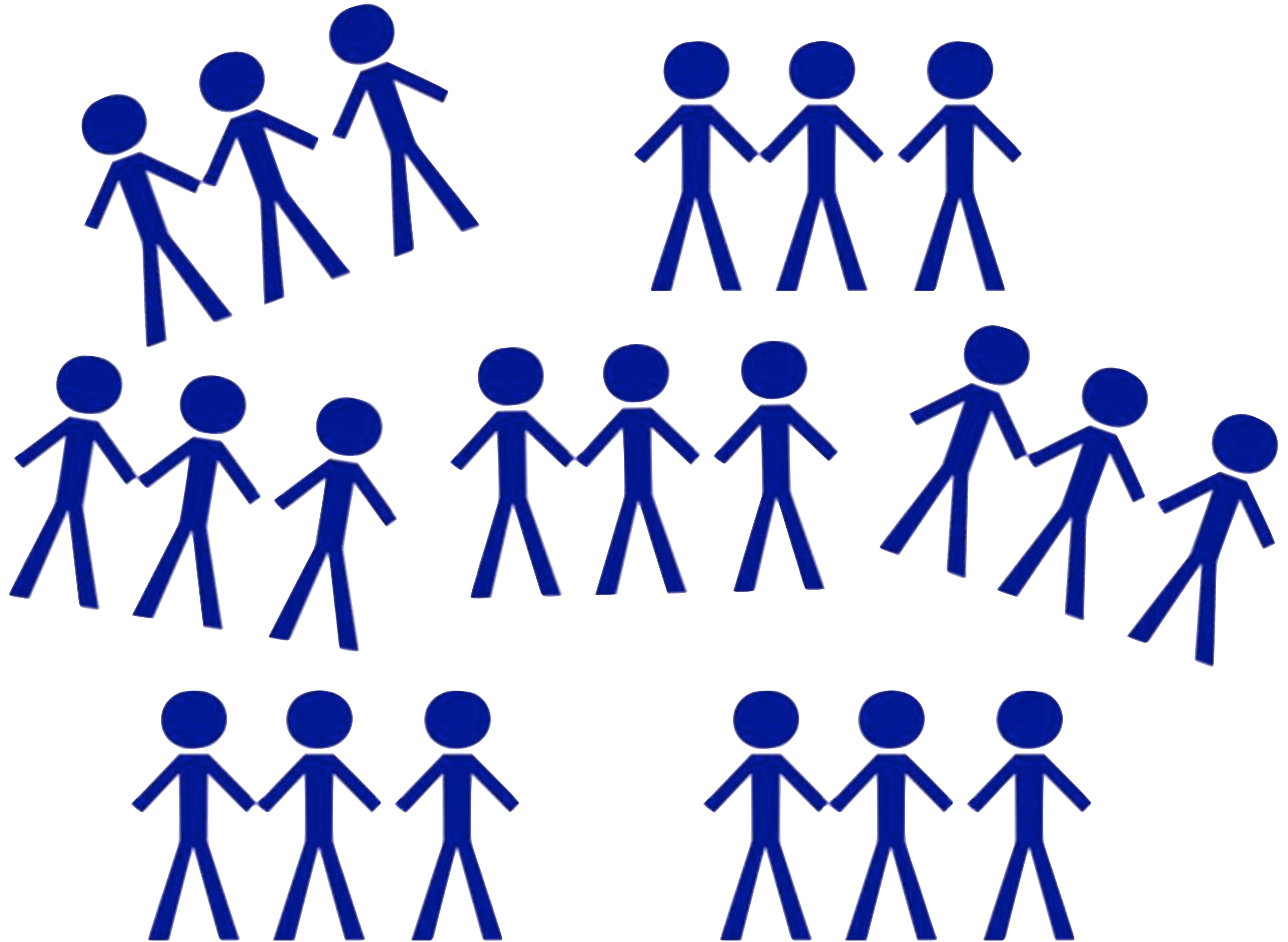


phillipmartin.info

In one of YOUR courses and on its syllabus, what counts? In other words, how have you told the students that their grade will be calculated?

share with your neighbor





Grades should be based on achievement only; in other words, grades should be a description of students' knowledge and skills regarding the standards. Effort participation, attitude and other behaviors are very important, but they should be reported separately.

Ken O'Connor, "The Last Frontier: Tackling the Grading Dilemma," *Ahead of the Curve* (Reeves, ed.), 2007.

Traditionally, grades are calculated: all individual assessments are added, and the grade is the mean, or **average**, of all the scores. This works against students because outlier scores are almost always low. Grades will be more accurate if we determine--not just calculate--them.

Learning is a process, and there are different phases involved: **a learning phase** when students practice their knowledge, and **a performance phase** when students demonstrate what they know, understand and can do. Teachers should . . . determine grades only from the evidence from varied summative assessments.

One very serious problem with number crunching is the use of **zeros** (most commonly for missing or late assignments) in the calculation of grades. This is an inappropriate practice because the resulting grade is a serious misrepresentation of the student's achievement.



WHAT MATTERS MOST

What we assess, how we assess it, and how we “count it” tell our students what matters.

Take aways . . .

- what are 3 big messages you are taking away today?
- what changes do you want to make?
- what do you think the effect of those changes will be?

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Where

downloadable handout at

resourcesfromgreg.wikispaces.com

How do I
close the
gap?



Where
am I
now?